



# **The WisDOT Connector *Express***

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## **Proposed passenger rail service could generate over \$23 billion in benefits**

There's now further evidence that an enhanced Midwest passenger rail service holds tremendous potential benefits in the form of time savings, congestion relief, emission reductions and economic gains. A recent report completed for the nine-state Midwest Regional Rail System (MWRRS) indicates the proposed 3,000-mile regional rail initiative could generate over \$23 billion in user benefits during the first 40-years of the project. In Wisconsin, the benefits total between \$3.5 billion and \$4.6 billion, in addition to creating 9,570 new permanent jobs and \$173 million in extra household income. The report indicates that every dollar invested in the high-speed passenger rail service would generate \$1.80 in benefits - one of the highest returns for any regional rail system in the U.S. The MWRRS in Wisconsin would consist of two proposed routes: Chicago to St. Paul, and Chicago to Green Bay. More information, including a link to the full report can be found on the WisDOT Web site at:

<http://www.dot.wisconsin.gov/projects/rail.htm>.

## **Keeping an eye on Dane County area traffic**

Drivers planning a trip along major travel corridors in the Dane County region can now check up-to-date images of traffic conditions via the WisDOT Web site. Similar to traffic cameras that have been operating along Milwaukee-area freeways for years, drivers can now access a network of 22 video cameras that monitor traffic volumes and conditions at key locations in the Madison area. Updated every three minutes, the video images can be found at:

[www.dot.wisconsin.gov/travel/road/](http://www.dot.wisconsin.gov/travel/road/). The camera images are centrally monitored at WisDOT's State Traffic Operations Center in Milwaukee and help transportation and law enforcement officials react promptly to incidents that impact traffic flow. WisDOT will continue to plan and expand the traffic-monitoring video camera network in other communities in conjunction with future construction projects and as funding levels permit.

## **Video profiler vehicle weaves web across the state**

When people first glimpse WisDOT's highway video profiler vehicle, the most common reaction is "what does that thing do?" The only vehicle of its type in the state, the video profiler inspects about half of the state highway system every year and provides a detailed, consistent analysis of roadway conditions. Most conspicuous are the vehicle's four spider-like legs or booms that support seven video cameras (five in front, two in the rear) which provide a visual history of roadway and shoulder conditions. In addition, five laser sensors in the front bumper "feel" the road for smoothness, taking measurements every 1/16<sup>th</sup> of an inch. Traveling at highway speeds, the video profiler can gather info on up to 600 miles of road per day. The data is recorded, stored and later analyzed as part of efforts to prioritize highway improvements. First introduced in the year 2000, WisDOT's video profiler vehicle has logged some 300,000 miles.

**A weight off our shoulders**

As of Monday May 7<sup>th</sup>, spring weight restrictions will be lifted on all highways in Wisconsin. The restrictions on trucks carrying heavy loads were in place during the period when roads were more susceptible to damage because roadbeds were soft as a result of the annual freeze-thaw cycle. With the end of the spring weight limits, truck haulers can once again obtain special permits to exceed the normal 80,000-pound weight limit.

**Public information meetings on I-94 north-south corridor**

WisDOT is planning a series of public workshops and public information meetings in Milwaukee, Racine and Kenosha counties to present concepts and ideas on possible improvements to the I-94 north-south corridor, extending from the Mitchell Interchange area in Milwaukee to the Illinois state line. Public information meetings are currently set for: May 16<sup>th</sup> in Kenosha; May 22<sup>nd</sup> in Oak Creek; and May 23<sup>rd</sup> in Milwaukee. More information is on the WisDOT Web site at: <http://www.dot.state.wi.us/projects/d2/i94/meeting.htm>.

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